

George Grosz (1893-1959)

Internationally Renowned leader of the Berlin Dada Movement

The Dada artist George Grosz (1893-1959) had a close relationship to Huntington, New York and to the Heckscher Museum of Art. Born in Berlin, Grosz was a leading member of the Dada movement there and later painted many caustic works criticizing the rise of Nazism. Like many artists who fled Europe, Grosz immigrated to the United States, settling in Bayside, Queens in 1933 and taught at the Art Students League in New York. In 1947, he moved further out on Long Island to Huntington where he lived a quarter mile away from the Heckscher Museum of Art. He was instrumental in getting the Museum to reopen full-time after World War II and, under the auspices of the Huntington Township Art League, he taught art at the Heckscher. Grosz returned to Germany in May 1959 to live out his days, but died from a fall down a flight of stairs within weeks of his return.



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Following World War II, when German art was especially unpopular, Grosz's large masterpiece *Eclipse of the Sun* of 1926 became available from a Long Island source in 1968. The Heckscher Museum's brilliant director Eva Gatling pursued its acquisition with singular commitment and vigor. The



Eclipse of the Sun, 1926

painting features a scathing critique of the military industrial complex that controlled Weimar Germany where power and greed reigned supreme. Bureaucrats, who are depicted as being "mindless," attend to the corrupt dealings of the corpulent industrialist and the President of the Reich, von Hindenburg. The sun, a symbol of life, is eclipsed by a dollar sign, a symbol of greed. The donkey, a symbol of the German burgher, has blinders on to signify his ignorance. A small child, representing youth or perhaps a dissident voice, is kept imprisoned below demonstrating the lack of concern for future generations. The complicated perspective of this powerful painting underscores the instability of Weimar Germany. *Eclipse of the Sun* is the Heckscher's most acclaimed painting, considered by many to be the most famous and important painting on Long Island and a 20th century masterpiece. You can view this masterwork at the Heckscher Museum of Art, 2 Prime Avenue, Huntington, NY.

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